Reviewer's report

Title: The health status of Q-fever patients after long-term follow-up.

Version: 1 Date: 27 December 2010

Reviewer: Jean Paul Stahl

Reviewer's report:

Review of the paper: The health status of Q-fever patients after long-term follow-up.

This paper is very interesting and essential for a better knowledge of Q-fever. Some corrections or precisions are suggested.

• The summary has 321 words, that is more than the “classical” authorization of 250, but I had no information about this abstract length for BMC.

• Verbs used to relate outbreaks should be, in my sense, the past. For example “…60% are asymptomatic » (in the introduction) should be «…. were asymptomatic », and so on, if, as I understand, it refers to the Netherlands recent outbreaks. If it refers to general observations about Q-fever, the present is correct. In the discussion, it is the same. Verbs relating the study should be used in the past tense: “General quality of life (44•9%) and fatigue (43•5%) are severely affected in our study subjects » should be “…were severely…”, in order to make clearly the difference between literature and the study.

• Authors should clarify better, in the introduction, what is related to the literature, and what is the objective of their study. I understand that literature describes some clinical presentations, and authors of this paper wanted to verify, using their large cohort, if it is correlated to their own data.

• Authors did not give information about the patients' serological tests. It is said that chronic Q-fever is correlated to phase I antigens. Do authors have data leading to conclusions about it? It could be interesting to confirm, or not, it, if possible. Anyway, even if these data are lacking, it is interesting to discuss it.

• Authors do not report endocarditis cases, which are reported in literature as frequent presentations of chronic Q-fever. Could they comment?

Answers to the questions:

1. Is the question posed by the authors well defined? yes
2. Are the methods appropriate and well described? yes
3. Are the data sound? yes
4. Does the manuscript adhere to the relevant standards for reporting and data deposition? yes
5. Are the discussion and conclusions well balanced and adequately supported by the data? yes
6. Are limitations of the work clearly stated? yes
7. Do the authors clearly acknowledge any work upon which they are building, both published and unpublished? yes
8. Do the title and abstract accurately convey what has been found? yes
9. Is the writing acceptable? Yes

I suggest acceptation with minor discretionary revisions

Level of interest: An article of outstanding merit and interest in its field

Quality of written English: Acceptable

Statistical review: No, the manuscript does not need to be seen by a statistician.

Declaration of competing interests:

I declare that I have no competing interests